AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:

a processor;

a memory coupled to the processor, the memory storing a pre-selected input characteristic;

a stored password;

instructions causing a system boot or reboot not to be halted during a POST procedure, by an unauthorized user, by adding a timeout to the password;

instructions causing the processor to compare a first input entered by the user to the pre-selected input characteristic;

instructions causing the processor to ignore an input during a power-on self test procedure unless the first input matches the pre-selected input characteristic;

instructions causing the processor to prompt a user of the computer system for a password when the first input matches the pre-selected input characteristic;

instructions causing the processor to compare a password entered by the user to the stored password; and

instructions causing the processor to process inputs during the power-on self test procedure subsequent to the first input when the password entered by the user matches the stored password.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:

the data corresponds to a keystroke on a keyboard.

4. (Original) The computer system of claim 3 wherein:

the data corresponds to an F2 key.

5. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:

the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to access a system setup procedure.

6. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:

the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to request boot functions.

7. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:

the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to reboot the computer system.

8. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:

the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to switch off a power supply of the computer system.

9. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:

the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to access an Option Read Only Memory utility.

10. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:

the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to halt a power-on self test function.

11. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein:

the processing of inputs other than the first input enables the user to omit a power-on self test function.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a computer system comprising:

ignoring all inputs from an input/output device during a power-on self test procedure except a pre-specified input;

upon detection of the pre-specified input, prompting a user for a password;

causing a system boot or reboot not to be halted during a POST procedure, by an unauthorized user, by adding a timeout to the password;

comparing the password entered by the user in response to the prompting to a previously-stored password; and

processing inputs other than the pre-specified input during the power-on self-test procedure if and only if the password entered by the user matches the previously-stored password.

13. (Cancelled).

14. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

the pre-specified input is generated by a keystroke on a keyboard.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein:

the keystroke is a pressing of an F2 key.

16. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

the processing gives a user access to a system setup procedure.

17. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

the processing gives a user an ability to request boot functions.

18. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

the processing gives a user an ability to reboot the computer system.

19. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

the processing gives a user an ability to switch off a power supply of the computer system.

20. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

the processing gives a user an ability to access an Option Read Only Memory utility.

21. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

the processing gives a user an ability to halt a power-on self test function.

22. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

the processing gives a user an ability to omit a power-on self test function.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a storage medium storing data and instructions operable to:

mask all inputs from an input/output device during a power-on self test procedure, except at least one input that corresponds to predetermined data;

upon reception of an input that corresponds to the predetermined data, transmit a prompt for a password;

cause a system boot or reboot not to be halted during a POST procedure, by an unauthorized user, by adding a timeout to the password;

compare ~~a~~ the password received from the input/output device to a qualified password; and

if the received password conforms to the qualified password, accept and respond to other inputs from an input/output device during the power-on self test procedure.

24. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:

the masking masks from a processor the inputs from an input/output device during power-on self test; and

the reception of the input that corresponds to the predetermined data is performed by the processor.

25. (Cancelled).

26. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:

the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to access a system setup procedure.

27. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:

the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to request boot functions.

28. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:

the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to reboot the computer system.

29. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:

the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to switch off a power supply of the computer system.

30. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:

the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to access an Option Read Only Memory utility.

31. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:

the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to halt a power-on self test function.

32. (Original) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein:

the accepting and responding to other inputs enables the user to omit a power-on self test function.